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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [UNAU](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [AF](#) [UNODC](#)
SUBJECT: UNODC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COSTA REITERATED CRIME
LINKAGE WITH ONDCP AND INL

REF: A. 09UNVIEVIENNA 99
[1](#)B. 09UNVIEVIENNA 72

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte, reasons 1.4 (c) and (d).

[1](#)1. (u) This cable contains an action request in paragraph 13.

[1](#)2. (c) Summary. INL Assistant Secretary (A/S) David Johnson, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Acting Director (AD) Ed Jurith, and Ambassador Schulte met with Executive Director (ED) Antonio Costa March 13 on the margins of the High-level segment of the 52nd UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). Meeting participants discussed a range of issues, including Costa's March 5 concept paper on organized crime and the need to strengthen the crime conventions. Costa emphasized the importance of treating organized crime seriously, including through action to strengthen the crime Conventions and possibly a UN General Assembly review of organized crime as a threat to stability and security. He clarified that any restructuring of UNODC would not blur UNODC's balance between the normative and technical assistance functions of his office, and he would keep the Department of Treaty Affairs as a free-standing entity. With regard to Afghanistan, A/S Johnson indicated that detailed plans for the upcoming March Afghanistan meeting were still pending, including Costa's request to participate; Costa reported that UNODC was beginning to grapple with assembling statistics on corruption in Afghanistan in order to develop an updated political message. Costa welcomed the announcement of the nomination of the new Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske, Mr. Jurith's summary of the on-going process to update U.S. National Drug Control strategy, and the opportunity to meet the new ONDCP Director. End Summary.

Encouraging a Measured Interpretation of Costa's Report

[1](#)3. (c) In a March 13 meeting, INL A/S David Johnson, AD Jurith, Ambassador Schulte, Costa opened the meeting by quoting Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora as saying the press was yet again misinformed and not using good faith in its reporting on Costa's March 5 concept paper, "Organized Crime and Its Threat to Security: Tackling a Disturbing Consequence of Drug Control." A/S Johnson noted that it was important for Costa to ensure that the press better understand that this paper did not intend to criticize the crime conventions as being ineffective nor that a successful drug control regime was weakening these conventions. Costa responded that his report's key assertion that organized crime is an "unintended consequence" of the drug control regime had been made over a year ago and that UNODC was being "honest." He added that he could not deny the extraordinary threat posed by organized crime - and that this crime was primarily drug-related.

[1](#)4. (c) Noting that he had purposely "kept to the middle" on this issue, Costa added that he was proud that UNODC and the international community are now knowledgeable on what actions to take to combat drugs around the world, from Thailand, to Turkey, to Pakistan, to Colombia. He stressed that programs on both the supply and demand side were now well-developed.

However, he emphasized, the international community has formulated no answers on combating powerful organized crime groups and remains ill-equipped to address the drug trafficking problems in West Africa and the Caribbean. Adding that the illicit drugs in these regions were fueling money-laundering, organized crime and threats to security such as the recent killings in Guinea Bissau, Costa stressed that unless the international community addresses this issue, the pressure against the crime Conventions will keep mounting.

15. (c) Costa then made a plea to the U.S. delegation and "all member states" to take the crime conventions very seriously. He proffered that Italy had not ratified one, Japan another. Stating, "let's get serious," Costa emphasized the need to promote the conventions so as not to be faced with executing addicts and suppliers like in China and Iran. In response to A/S Johnson's query regarding the number of countries that have not ratified the Conventions, Costa said most have actually ratified most of them but that there had been no momentum for real action since the Conference of Parties. For example, Costa reminded the delegation that the U.S., China, Russia, and the UK, among others, have not ratified the Firearm Protocol. Costa inquired whether the new Administration would reinstate the assault rifle ban (note: the U.S., nevertheless, is in full compliance with this protocol). A/S Johnson reported that Secretary Napolitano, in recent Congressional testimony, had said the Administration had not yet developed a policy on the issue so the question remained outstanding.

16. (c) Returning to the current state of the crime conventions, A/S Johnson emphasized that we should be very careful not to seem to say these conventions are failures but rather should look at what can be done to strengthen them. Costa again dismissed the more dramatic press coverage on his report by noting that the press would always pick and choose what to quote from his statements but that he was not going to let that stifle his discussion of the issue. That being said, Costa also acknowledged that he understood the U.S. message and would pay greater attention to how his ideas were presented. A/S Johnson added that the U.S. believed that treaty functions are very important and they must work together to enhance and strengthen them. Acknowledging that the crime conventions are relatively new compared to the drug conventions and undergoing a late "teething process," Costa added that member states did not really have a clear concept for how to strengthen them. In order to stimulate better focus on these conventions, Costa explained that UNODC was starting to compile statistics on organized crime, while at the same time promoting the ratification, implementation, and understanding of the conventions.

Support for Regional GRULAC Cooperation

17. (c) Division of Operations Director Francis Maertens interjected with information regarding GRULAC countries. He explained that they were supportive of greater regional programs to combat drugs and crime and had circulated a draft CND resolution on implementation of the Santo Domingo Pact to combat drugs and crime. Maertens noted that consensus on this resolution at the CND next week would be an important symbol of support. Costa added that there was true enthusiasm in the GRULAC region for these initiatives (although the Costa Rica meeting had been postponed) and encouraged the U.S., as the region's northern side, to be a stronger leader and supporter of these initiatives. A/S Johnson noted that the U.S. had been planning to participate in the upcoming Costa Rica meeting and agreed that the countries in the region needed encouragement to work together as regional partners. Costa agreed and reported that Mexico was also supportive of these efforts.

Bringing Organized Crime to NY?

18. (c) Turning back more specifically to organized crime, Costa reported that Mexico would like to invite the UNGA

President (incoming) to examine organized crime as a threat to stability and security and that Mexico had solicited UNODC's views on this proposal. Costa told the U.S. delegation that he believes the idea is an interesting one and could be handled in a similar way to the development of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

Maintaining Normative and Technical Balance in UNODC

9 (c) On the issue of possible structural changes in UNODC (ref b), Costa provided background on UNODC's current funding crisis and how that led to the need to freeze the Treaty Affairs Director position, but unequivocally stated that "grapevine rumors" that this freezing would lead to the disappearance of the Division of Treaty Affairs were entirely unfounded. He told the U.S. delegation that he strongly believed in the importance of the balance between normative and operational functions of UNODC. Indeed, Costa added that a blurring of this division would "breakdown" UNODC's calibrated research/analysis/operations process.

Update on U.S. Drug Control Policy

10. (c) Mr. Jurith raised the issue of the newly nominated ONDCP Director and his upcoming confirmation process, noting that the confirmation process notwithstanding, ONDCP was already developing strategies to implement the Administration's increasing focus on reducing demand, including programs such as drug courts and treatment and prevention for those on probation and parole. As Mr. Jurith explained, ONDCP believed outreach to the hard-core addict population was very important and that programs must focus on finding ways to bring them from the shadows into the mainstream and hopefully treatment. Mr. Jurith added that these new U.S. initiatives would not include all elements of the broad spectrum of harm reduction. Mr. Jurith indicated that the new strategy would be released early February 2010. Costa said these were positive developments and indicated he looked forward to meeting the new ONDCP Director in the future.

Afghanistan Action

11. (c) Turning to Afghanistan, A/S Johnson reported that information was still pending on the March 31 Afghanistan meeting. Costa noted that the Secretary General and the Secretary would cohost. Costa added that UNODC was starting a survey to produce a report that would assist in creating a platform to build an updated political message for Afghanistan. Costa stated that the previous message about regaining control in Afghanistan on a counter narcotics strategy was a successful one as were UNODC's three recommended pillars. According to Costa, "food for thought" on the updated political message should include focusing attention on corruption. To this end, reported Costa, UNODC was inputting information into the survey to see what kind of platform could be built.

12. (c) In response to A/S Johnson's query as to how would a survey on corruption be created, Costa indicated his staff was complaining but he believed the 367 surveyors in Afghanistan could be used effectively in this regard. Maertens added that he had heard from Afghan Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani that illicit drug production in Afghanistan was in the hands of 20 Afghan families. A/S Johnson replied that drug production was not that tightly organized but had understood that the UK believed large landowners controlled operations in Helmand, and of course this issue depended to a degree on how "family" is defined. Costa stated that he believed cartels might be growing in Afghanistan as they had in Colombia but that they had not "internationalized" yet and operated only in Afghanistan. Raising the Trilateral initiative (Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan) and the recent

Joint Planning Cell counter narcotics operation along their border, Costa reported that the seizures were not that much, but the political symbolism of this joint operation was an important one. He added that Iran recognized this symbolism and found the operation important but Pakistan had complained. Nonetheless, the operation was an important one.

Action Request

¶13. (c) We would welcome reports from USUN on any Mexican initiative to bring Organized Crime to the UNGA or UN Security Council. End Action Request.

SCHULTE